

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Craig A. Fieschko on 10/9/09.

**The application has been amended as follows:**

2. The following claims have been amended and a complete list is being provided below:

a. List of claims

1-14. (CANCELED)

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of restoring hook material used for hook and loop attachment, the hook material having stems arrayed thereupon with the stems each terminating in a hook, the method comprising the step of raking along a length of the hook material with a member having an arcuately curved handle with an elongated cross-section having a leading edge with a plurality of spaced teeth disposed ~~in parallel rows~~, in first and second rows extending along the cross-section, with the second row having elongated teeth angularly bent from the curve of the handle inwardly toward a plane

**defined by the teeth of the first row, and the first row having elongated teeth shorter than the teeth of the second row,** wherein

- a. the width of each respective tooth, and
- b. the spacing apart of adjacent teeth,

are such that adjacent hooks on the hook material have one of the teeth fit therebetween closely adjacent to their stems, and wherein the leading edge is raked along the length of the hook material to have the teeth engage and bend the hooks from a hooked state to a more straightened state such that debris situated within the hooks is lifted from the hook material by the teeth.

- 16. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 15 wherein the teeth are centered approximately 0.8 mm apart, with the widths and spacing of the teeth being such that each tooth engages at least a major portion of a surface area of the hook material between adjacent stems.
- 17. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 15 wherein the teeth are centered 0.7-0.9 mm apart, with the widths and spacing of the teeth being such that each tooth engages at least a major portion of a surface area of the hook material between adjacent stems.

18. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 15 wherein:
- a. the spacings between adjacent teeth are equal to or slightly greater than the thickness of one of the stems, such that the teeth engage adjacent hooks and/or their stems, and
  - b. the width of each tooth is equal to or slightly less than the distance between adjacent stems, such that each tooth engages at least a major portion of a surface area of the hook material between adjacent stems.
19. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 15 wherein at least one of the teeth has a wedge-shaped leading edge.
20. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 15 wherein at least one of the teeth terminates in a leading edge, and has a width which increases as the tooth extends rearwardly of the leading edge.
21. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 20 wherein the tooth has opposing sides with the leading edge therebetween, and wherein both sides incline away from the leading edge.
22. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** The method of claim 15 wherein ~~the plurality of teeth are disposed in a first row on the leading edge and a second row~~

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~~extending parallel to the first row, and wherein~~ the teeth in the second row  
are arrayed in echelon with the teeth in the first row.

23. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** An apparatus for restoring hook material used for hook and loop attachment, such hook material having thereupon an array of stems terminating in hooks, the apparatus being defined by a plastic rake with an elongated cross-section having an arcuately curved length sized to fit within a user's hand and including:

- (1) a plurality of spaced teeth defined in a first discrete set extending across the cross-section wherein:
  - a. the width of each respective tooth, and
  - b. the spacing apart of adjacent teeth,are sized to allow each tooth to closely pass between adjacent stems on the hook material,
- (2) a second discrete set of spaced teeth is provided spaced from the first set, and extending across the cross-section, wherein the teeth in the second set are:
  - a. sized and spaced similarly to the teeth in the first set, **and**
  - b. ~~angled differently than the teeth~~ angularly bent from the curved length of the rake to extend toward a plane defined by the teeth in the first set, **and**
  - c. longer than the teeth in the first set,

wherein each tooth includes a forward leading edge, and each tooth is tapered to increase in:

- a. width,

b. height, and

c. thickness,

as the tooth extends rearwardly of the leading edge, wherein raking the sets of spaced teeth along a length of hook material causes the teeth to engage and bend the hooks from a hooked state to a more straightened state such that debris situated within the hooks is lifted from the hook material by the teeth.

24-26. **(CANCELED)**

27. **(CURRENTLY AMENDED)** An apparatus for restoring hook material used for hook and loop attachment, such hook material having thereupon an array of stems terminating in hooks, the apparatus being defined by a plastic rake sized to fit within the hand, and including:
- a. an elongated handle having at least substantially uniform elongated width extending along the length of the handle, the length of the handle being arcuately curved, and
  - b. first and second arrays of teeth extending from the handle, wherein the arrays of teeth extend across the width of the handle at or adjacent one end of the length of the handle,
- wherein the first and second arrays each define one or more rows of teeth, the rows in the first array ~~being parallel to the rows in the second array~~, having teeth shorter than the teeth of the rows of the second array, and the rows in the second array having teeth angularly bent from the arcuate curve of the handle inwardly toward a plane defined by one of the rows of the first array, and wherein:
- (1) each tooth within the arrays is sized to fit between adjacent stems of hook material,
  - (2) adjacent teeth of each array are spaced to allow passage of one of the stems therebetween, and
  - (3) the teeth within the rows of the first array are angled differently from the teeth within the rows of the second array,

wherein the teeth are sized, spaced, and angled such that raking the sets of spaced teeth along a length of hook material causes the teeth to engage and bend the hooks from a hooked state to a more straightened state, and thereby lift debris situated within the hooks.

28. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first array and second array are spaced by a toothless valley.
29. **(CANCELED)**
30. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the teeth of the second array are set in echelon with the teeth of the first array.
31. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 27 wherein at least one of the arrays includes tapered teeth, wherein each tapered tooth grows thicker in at least one dimension as the tapered tooth extends rearwardly from the leading edge of the tapered tooth.
32. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 31 wherein each tapered tooth is axially symmetric in at least one plane defined along an axis extending rearwardly from the leading edge of the tapered tooth.



33. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 32 wherein at least one of the arrays includes tapered teeth, wherein each tapered tooth grows thicker in at least one dimension as the tapered tooth extends rearwardly from its leading edge.
34. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 22 wherein the teeth in the second line are angled in non-parallel relationship with the teeth in the first line.
35. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the teeth in the second discrete set are arrayed in echelon with the teeth in the first discrete set.
36. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The apparatus of claim 23 wherein:
- a. the rake further includes a handle from which the teeth extend,
  - b. the sets of spaced teeth extend across the width of the handle at or adjacent one end of the length of the handle, and
  - c. the handle has an at least substantially uniform width along the length of the handle.

#### **REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE**

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

b. The invention is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious because an arcuately curved handle with an elongated cross-section having a leading edge with a plurality of spaced teeth disposed in first and second rows extending along the cross-section, with the second row having elongated teeth angularly bent from the curve of the handle inwardly toward a plane defined by the teeth of the first row, and the first row having elongated teeth shorter than the teeth of the second row claimed in combination with the other claimed limitations.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LEE D. WILSON whose telephone number is 571-272-4499. The examiner can normally be reached on M-TH.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, MONICA CARTER can be reached on 571-272-4475. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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